AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 8, line 1 with the following replacement paragraph:

--Figure 3 shows a block diagram of a control circuit according to the present invention. This circuit includes a setpoint value generator 10, which generates a desired setpoint terminal voltage for drain-source voltage U_{DS} of MOSFET 11 from logical switching signal V_X, which specifies a switched-on state or ~~switched-on~~ switched-off state for the current path to be switched. In addition, a control unit 12 is provided which includes a proportional controller. Setpoint terminal voltage $U_{DS,setpoint}$ generated by setpoint-value generator 10 and current, actual terminal voltage $U_{DS,actual}$, that is, drain-source voltage U_{DS}, are supplied to control unit 12. The difference between these two variables represents the input variable for control device 12.---.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 4, line 11 with the following replacement paragraph:

--In the case of a circuit-closing operation, the control unit preferably adjusts the setpoint terminal voltage to a first setpoint value initially, and then adjusts it to a second setpoint value after a period of time elapses, the second setpoint value being less than or equal to a low operating potential in the case of a self-blocking semiconductor switch, i.e., a semiconductor switch that is normally off, or greater than or equal to a high operating potential in the case of a self-conducting semiconductor switch, i.e., a semiconductor switch that is normally on. Such a two-stage switching operation is useful for being able to control the excess voltages during the circuit-closing operation in the most effective manner possible. To this end, in accordance with the first setpoint value, the semiconductor switch is preferably operated in its active operating range during the period of time. In order to limit the forward power losses in the semiconductor switch, the second setpoint value must be set as the setpoint terminal voltage after expiration of the period of time, in order to completely switch the semiconductor switch through, so that the semiconductor switch is not destroyed by the high forward power losses. If the second setpoint value were to be properly specified at the start of the circuit-closing operation, i.e. if the circuit-closing operation is only performed by specifying a setpoint terminal voltage, which is less than or equal to a low operating potential or

greater than or equal to a high operating potential as a function of the conductivity type of the utilized semiconductor switch, the control unit would attempt to completely switch the semiconductor switch on as rapidly as possible. This would result in the commutation voltage at the inductors and, therefore, the rate of change of the current in the current path as well, becoming very large, which means that the switching operation would nearly correspond to a switching operation according to the related art and the voltage between the current-carrying terminals would sharply increase. The two-stage control operation allows the rate of change of the current in the current path to be reduced, so that disruptive emissions are reduced.--.